(c) During his talks with Pakistan President in Agra on 15.7.2001 Prime Minister urged Pakistan to take urgent, purposeful and vigorous steps to release the 54 Indian POWs to assuage the concerns of their families and their agonies.

Hacking of Mea's Website

541. SHRI R.R GOENKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's official website handled exclusively by his Ministry was reportedly hacked into recently by some foreign agencies and the hackers defaced the home page with vulgar graffiti on Indians and left a threat and some other messages;

(b) if so, details of the incident, including identity of the hackers, if established; and

(c) the action taken to improve the security firewalls of the website?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of External Affairs website http://www. indiagov. org was hacked on the night of 5-6 May, 2001 .The site was hacked by a group called "Hackactivist GFORCE". The hackers defaced the home page with graffiti and also left a threat that all major Indian official websites would be "manned" by the GFORCE in a few weeks time.

(c) It was imperative that the website was made properly secure before it was restarted. Following discussions by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Ministry of Information Technology and the National Informatics Centre (NIC) it was agreed that MEA's website be hosted in NIC premises within their "secure zone" behind the NIC "firewall" which is designed to prevent hacking. The web server was shifted to the NIC on May 24, 2001 and is now fully operational with the address http://www. *meadev, nic. in.*

Indo-Nepal Cooperation against anti-national activities

542. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Nepal have decided to cooperate in not allowing activities against one another in their territories?

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not whether any effort is being made between the two Governments on this agenda; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) A bilateral institutional frame work exists between India and Nepal for cooperation in the area of border management. The Fourth Meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Working Group on Border Management was held in New Delhi on 28 and 29 June, 2001.

During the meeting, both sides reiterated their determination not to allow their respective territories for activities directed against each other. They also had a useful exchange of views on various aspects of effective management of the India-Nepal border. They agreed to strengthen cooperation to control activities of terrorists/criminals and other undesirable elements across the border.

It was also agreed to hold regular meetings of the Interpol units of India and Nepal to expedite disposal of pending cases on both sides. Both sides also agreed to commence expert level discussions on a legal framework for cooperation in criminal and civil matters and to review extradition arrangements.

The two sides further agreed to expedite procedural aspects of improving infrastructural facilities at the border check-posts. While appreciating the arrangements at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, the meeting emphasised the need for early computerisation of immigration facilities.

It was also agreed to schedule talks between the Home Secretaries of the two countries at the earliest.

World Conference against Racism

t543. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have declined to include the caste-based discrimination in the UN Conference against Racial Discrimination to be held in Durban;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.